



Martha Coakley, Attorney General
Attn: Antitrust Division
Office of Attorney General
One Ashburton Place, 18th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

RE: Settlement with Partners HealthCare/Preservation of Psychiatric/Behavioral Health Services

Dear Attorney General Coakley,

I am writing this letter in support of a new provision in the proposed settlement between your office and Partners HealthCare that would ensure Partners commitment to behavioral health as it expands. The current provision states:

For a period of five years commencing on the Effective Date, during which period Partners intends to reorganize the psychiatric/behavioral health services that it provides in the communities north of Boston into programs centered on a new Center of Excellence in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health at Union Hospital, Partners will preserve those services at no less than their current level.

I believe this is really a “baseline” commitment and that Partners will see the need and benefit of going beyond the current configuration of services as it becomes a larger and more integrated part of the service continuum on the North Shore. Walden has worked closely with Partners facilities over the years and enjoys a strong collegial relationship with Massachusetts General Hospital, North Shore Medical Center and McLean Hospital. I think it is important to note that Partners facilities are host to a range of training programs that draw young professionals into the region; many providers of behavioral health services rely on these newly minted doctors and clinicians to staff their services. In addition, McLean Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women’s Hospital are leaders in psychiatric research and provide a range of services that are not available elsewhere.

While health care systems across the United States and locally have cut mental health programs or have been challenged to maintain quality standards, Partners and its institutions have grown these services and expanded their reach. I am confident that if this settlement is accepted, Partners and its institutions will preserve its psychiatric and behavioral health services and will continue to be a leader providing care to those with brain disease.

Respectfully,

Stuart L. Koman, PhD
President & CEO